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Introduction and Acknowledgments

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“People, Places, and Parks: Preservation for Future Generations” was the theme of the 2005 George Wright Society Biennial Conference on Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites. The conference took place April 14–18 in Philadelphia. It was the 13th in a series of conferences dating back to 1976.

GWS2005 comprised four plenary sessions, 137 concurrent sessions, and a poster / computer demo / exhibit session. Of special note at GWS2005 was the inauguration of a new scholarship program. The GWS launched the George Melendez Wright Student Travel Scholarship to encourage undergraduate and graduate students from diverse backgrounds to attend the conference. The scholarship program is part of the GWS’s commitment to fostering more diversity in park-related professions. Scholarship winners participated in conference sessions and learning activities, networked with peers and new colleagues, and had the chance to see how a professional conference works. With the support of many individuals and organizations (acknowledged below), we were able to grant almost 30 scholarships to students from the USA, Canada, and other countries.

This proceedings volume consists of more than 80 papers that are widely representative of those presented at conference sessions. It is available in both paperback and CD-ROM editions.

The George Wright Society is grateful to many people who helped make GWS2005 happen. The Conference Committee (David J. Parsons and Dwight T. Pitcaithley, co-chairs; Gillian Bowser, Mary Foley, Sharon Franklet, Bonnie Halda, David Reynolds, Nina Roberts, Gay Vietzke, and William H. Walker, Jr.) is at the core of the effort: developing the conference theme and plenary sessions, planning logistical details, and selecting abstracts for the concurrent and poster sessions, among many other things. For securing vital funding for the conference, we thank Sue Haseltine (U.S. Geological Survey); Mike Soukup, John Dennis, Marie Rust, and Jan Matthews (National Park Service); Chesley Moroz (Eastern National); Brad Barr (NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries); and Destry Jarvis and Tonia Blecher (Booz Allen Hamilton). Once again, Chuck Rafkind served as conference photographer. Special thanks go to all the people in the National Park Service Northeast Region who organized the slate of field trips. The photo of the Liberty Bell on the cover is courtesy of Independence National Historical Park.

We also thank all of the institutions and individuals who helped the GWS co-sponsor the inaugural round of George Melendez Wright Student Travel Scholarships: Pamela Wright Lloyd and James Lloyd, the national CESU Network, Texas A&M University, Yale University, University of Northern British Columbia, and Student Conservation Association. In addition, many other universities and organizations matched the GWS scholarship awards in order to enable their students to attend.

The next conference will be April 16–20, 2007, in St. Paul, Minnesota.